INL hosts southern Idaho visitors

INL hosted more than 70 visitors from Treasure Valley, southern Idaho and southeastern Idaho during a two-day visit to the laboratory on Oct. 16 and 17.

Steve Herring, INL Fission and Fusion Systems manager, explains to guests the processes involved in the High Temperature Electrolysis laboratory.

Monday morning, an INL bus met guests in Boise and made one stop in Twin Falls to transport more than 35 guests to Pocatello for a visit to Idaho State University's Idaho Accelerator Center. At IAC, they visited the testing and research facilities of an INL spin-off company, Positron Systems Inc. (PSI), which uses accelerated particles to characterize nanosized defects or changes in the structure of materials. Martin Hedley, PSI's chief executive officer, welcomed this group and about 20 more visitors from southeastern Idaho communities to the facility and briefed them on how the PSI technology functions. PSI has contracts with the U.S. military, NASA and commercial airlines.

Then, the two groups traveled to the INL campus in Idaho Falls for afternoon visits to more than a dozen research laboratories. During the evening, INL researchers and leaders met with the group at an information fair, where additional technologies were showcased and detailed discussions were held. INL's Director of Technology Partnerships, Jack Lance, gave a short briefing on doing business with the laboratory and how INL transfers technology for commercialization. During the remainder of the evening, guests visited the nearly 20 informational booths on technologies and research to learn more about the diversified programs under way at INL.

Derek Wadsworth, INL Robotics & Human Systems manager, explains to guests about INL's Robotics program in the Unmanned Aerial and Ground Vehicles.

After breakfast on Tuesday morning, the group traveled to INL's desert Site and received an overview of INL's more than 50-year history and a briefing on the nuclear fuel cycle. At the Materials and Fuels Complex, they met nuclear fuel researchers and saw key facilities used in developing new, more efficient nuclear fuels for next-generation reactors.

While traveling to the Reactor Technology Complex, the group learned about America's Global Nuclear Energy Partnership and the Next Generation Nuclear Plant programs. Upon arrival, the group toured INL's Advanced Test Reactor to learn about ATR's test and analysis capabilities, as well as radioisotope production for medical and other applications. By noon, the group was on its way back home.

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Kastli Schaller of INL's Biological Sciences Department shared information with guests on INL biotechnology and extremophile programs.